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ABSTRACT

A compilation of recommendations affecting the requirements at the University of Illinois includes chapters on foreign language study relating to degree requirements, program objectives, cultural objectives, motivation and interest, methods, and individual differences. A full description of the requirement by the college, a questionnaire used by the committee, and a bibliography complete the report. (DS)

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The Foreign Language Requirement in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Illinois

by

Richard E. Spencer

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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"And the Lord said, 'Behold the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.' So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel..."

Genesis, Ch. 2.

Requirements in foreign language:

The use of hours or credits criteria to fulfill college entrance or graduation requirements results in a wide range of achievement level in any given subject. For example, two years of French at University High School in Urbana is simply not equitable to two years of French in many other schools in Illinois. Not only do the students who attend a school such as University High differ significantly from the normal student, but the instruction is also likely to be better and faster. Similarly, it has been discovered (Spencer and Flaugher [1967] and Flaugher and Spencer [1967]) that the number of intervening years between high school and college foreign language study has a major effect upon placement into and success in college study--the greater the number of years, the lower the placement and the less chance for success. It was also found that there is little evidence to support the belief that one year of high school study is equivalent to one semester of college study.

It is obvious, therefore, that requirements must be stated in terms of achievement or proficiency rather than in semester hours, high school years, or credits. The college criteria now used is "...equivalent to the completion of 104." It is interesting to note that because of the nature of University selection changes from year to year, placement programs, differences in grading philosophies (Spencer, 1968), the inherent differences in languages and language departments (Spencer, 1965), and the quality or quantity of work completed in 104 from one year to the next, this criteria also is unstable. Thus the 104 "standard" is a variable one. The graduate college seems to have responded to this kind of problem by using a common examination system, which is equated across languages (the College Board Examinations).

This sub-committee recommends that any consideration of achievement of proficiency be stated in concrete, behavioral terms rather than in terms of credits, hours, or time spent in class.

Course requirements are established to provide the means whereby students can be exposed to content areas deemed essential for a particular field. The tendency in American educational history has been to begin with a fairly restrictive set of requirements (in terms of alternative paths to a common end). Subsequently, in almost every area of activity there is increasing variability in the means to reach these stated objectives and/or a continual restatement or redefinition of the ends, permitting the development of multiple paths to reach desired goals. Thus, Greek and Latin as a language requirement has been altered to include other and more modern foreign languages. Multiple alterantives to meet requirements in the life sciences also exist; one may take zoology, botany, biology, or physiology; in the physical sciences: physics, chemistry, astronomy, or geology. In the social sciences options available are psychology, sociology, and anthropology. In the areas of mathematics and foreign language study alternatives are not so readily available. Although in mathematics one may opt for statistics, computer programming, descriptive, plane or solid geometry, calculus, functions, or algebra, requirements in this field follow a linear pattern. As in the foreign language situation, many individuals whose interests are in non-quantitative areas decry the requirement in mathematics. Students are selected for the university who show evidence of superiority in a combination of both verbal and quantitative achievement. By using ACT Composite as an entrance requirement, some students who may be quite high in verbal areas (potentially successful English or social science students) are eliminated because of a lower and unacceptable score in quantitative achievement. The reverse is also true. Thus one may eliminate potentially excellent students in one field because of a requirement, policy or desire for a more "rounded" individual. Whether such a plan is possible, efficient, or useful for the society is a question Liberal Arts faculty members will have to solve for themselves. Obviously, those in mathematics or the physical and life sciences may consider a student relatively uneducated if he shows limited achievement in mathematics. Similarly, those in the

verbal areas of the liberal arts may consider it unnecessary to meet requirements in the quantitative areas. Serious consideration ought to be directed toward the ramification of this policy prior to its adoption by an educational institution.

The foreign language requirement for entrance represents problems similar to those in mathematics. The requirement asking applicants to show at least two years of high school study in a single foreign language undoubtedly has its benefits but it also has a cost. Obviously a student has less time to spend in other content ares if this requirement has to be met. The literature on the subject (Bloomfield 1945) seems to question the validity of such a requirement.

The installation of a requirement for high school graduates naturally decreases the degree to which the high school student and indeed, the high school itself, can develop courses or innovations in areas other than those prescribed by colleges. Requirements can thus inhibit secondary education in terms of freedom of development and creativity. That the requirements are stated in terms of time or Carnegie Units (number of years) also seems to act in a negative fashion. Variance in language achievement of entering freshmen with two years of study validate the inequality that results from a time criteria.

It would seem that the reasons for requirements for admission would be as follows:

1. To enable students to most validly and most efficiently use their time at the college.
2. To bring students to a prerequisite level of achievement in order for them to successfully commence their college studies.
3. The college offers no courses at this level; thus, the student must prepare himself at the high school level.

These criteria appear to be unrealistic and impractical, however. Colleges do teach beginning courses in all areas (particularly the foreign languages), and there has been no indication that the language departments plan to cease such activity.

The criteria are also unrealistic since little attention is paid to the high school work in placing students in content areas at the college level. Placement procedures in mathematics, chemistry, biology, English, and the foreign languages are based solely on achievement tested upon entrance. Consideration as to the number of years experienced in high school or grades earned therein is completely absent. These criteria are used only to judge credit status for the foreign language courses. (This credit process has been reviewed by the Basic Foreign Language Committee, which recommends its abolition).

Thus, since what the student has taken, or what grade he earned in it, or how many years of credit he earned in it are ignored in his placement into the college program, what reason can be generated for its continued use? In a study of the foreign language requirements for entrance into other colleges and universities the Modern Language Association found that only two of the Big Ten institutions have such a requirement. (See Table I.) The majority of state universities (29 vs. 19) polled by the Modern Language Association DO NOT require high school foreign language for entrance. Neither Harvard nor Yale has such a requirement. The author can find no information that would indicate lower foreign language achievement results in high schools in Wisconsin, Iowa, Michigan, Ohio, or Minnesota where there is no entrance requirement. According to Parker (1967), "...only 31% of the credited Liberal Arts colleges in the United States still require foreign languages for entrance."

The results of the Modern Language Association study of graduation requirements in institutions offering a B.A. degree are presented in Table II. All these colleges require foreign language (to the extent indicated) proficiency for graduation. Most often this proficiency is determined by successful completion of a certain number of course units. The degree to which alternatives are available for this requirement was not considered in the Modern Language Association report.

Table I

State universities which do and do not require high school foreign language for entrance.

DO	DO NOT	
University of Alaska	University of Alabama	University of Nevada
University of California	University of Arizona	University of New Mexico
University of Connecticutt	University of Arkansas	University of North Dakota
University of Delaware	University of Colorado	University of Ohio
University of Illinois	University of Florida	Ohio State University
University of Indiana	University of Georgia	University of Oregon
University of Maine	University of Hawaii	University of South Carolina
University of Massachusetts	University of Idaho	University of South Dakota
University of Nebraska	(Purdue)	University of Utah
University of New Hampshire	(Northwestern)	University of West Virginia
University of North Carolina	(Chicago)	University of Wisconsin
University of Oklahoma	University of Iowa	State University of New York (9 of 13)
Penn State University	University of Kansas	
University of Rhode Island	University of Maryland	
University of Tennessee	University of Michigan	
University of Texas	University of Minnesota	
University of Vermont	University of Mississippi	
University of Virginia	University of Missouri	
University of Washington	University of Montana	

*Data from Wilbern, 1966, pp. 49-70.

Table II

B.A. Degree requirements in selected major institutions.

University of:

Alabama (12 hours)

Alaska (12 hours or 16 hours)

Arizona (16 hours)

Arkansas (10 hours)

California, Berkely (20 q. hours)

Colorado (16 hours)

Connecticutt (12 hours)

Delaware (12 hours)

Florida (12 hours)

Georgia (20 q. hours)

Hawaii (12 hours)

Idaho (16 hours)

Illinois (8-15 hours)

Indiana (8 hours)

Iowa (12 hours)

Kansas (16 hours)

Maine (12 hours)

Maryland (12 hours)

Massachusetts (12 hours)

Michigan (16 hours)

Minnesota (15 q. hours)

Mississippi (18 hours)

Missouri (13 hours)

Montana (23 q. hours)

Nebraska (16 hours)

Nevada (16 hours)

New Hampshire (1 year)

New Mexico (12 hours)

New York State University (12 hours)

North Carolina (12-15 hours)

North Dakota (18 hours)

Ohio (16 hours)

Oklahoma (10 hours)

Oregon (24 q. hours)

Pennsylvania State University (12 hours)

Rhode Island (12 hours)

South Carolina (18 hours)

Texas (12 hours)

Utah (25 q. hours)

Vermont (14 hours)

Virginia (12 hours)

Washington (24 q. hours)

West Virginia (12 hours)

Wisconsin (14-18 hours)

The present 104 equivalency requirement can be questioned on another ground; the fairness of its application in practice. Since 4 years of high school study fulfill the requirement, but high school years and college semesters are admittedly unequal, the equivalency is invalid. The greatest inequality occurs at the level of one high school year; the least inequality at the 4-year level; thus, depending upon the high school experience (in number of years), and the fact that placement occurs according to a common, homogenizing examination, different requirements exist for different types of students. The student who most easily fulfills the college requirement and yet probably ends up with the least proficiency or fluency in the language is the student who has met the requirement in high school. The student who least easily fulfills the requirement is probably one who has had two years in each of two languages in high school but elects to take a third language in college; he would end up with 4 years of high school language and 4 semesters of college language. Thus, one can see that there is already in existence a policy in foreign language which is differentially met by different types of students. It would seem of interest to determine if the student with the most exposure arrives in that condition by one of two routes--he is a major or minor in a language and thus takes considerable numbers of hours in that subject; or he is a student who has difficulty with language learning and thus travels hither and yon through Latin, Spanish, and French before finally meeting the requirement.

In establishing a foreign language requirement, it seems to be assumed that the benefits of such study are homogeneous enough to warrant an all inclusive policy, and that the population of students is homogeneous enough to call for a common requirement for all in order to reach the objectives. Relative to these objectives in teaching foreign language, Bozan says:

> "Many of the current assertions cannot claim any status other than that of assumptions." Bozan, 1964, p. 337.

and

> "We are at present proceeding on the basis of many assumptions which may or may not be well-founded." Bozan, 1964, p. 337.

Roeming questions present practices:

> "...the delusion remains that 'a' people has 'a' language which can be transmitted in finite form from one generation to the other and to other peoples, that the finite form is written and thus finds its ultimate verification in its literature." Roeming, 1967, p. 411.

For all the benefits claimed for it, the literature reporting the results of language study does not support it:

> "To claim this accomplishment for a one or two year course, made up of the necessary basic linguistic groping plus a plodding exploration of a handful of short stories, a play, and a novel or two, is to endow students of a language with a rather refined perceptiveness and sensitivity." Staubach, 1955, p. 120.

One of the reasons for such disappointment may be how it is taught, when it is taught, or by whom it is taught.

> "...much of the elementary language teaching in the university is done by a young first or second year graduate student without much background outside his language field and who has not yet had an opportunity even to visit the country under discussion." Allen, 1955, p. 119.

It might be worthwhile to consider the objectives of language study and the degree to which such objectives have been met.

We have thus far not identified or defined what a foreign language really is. It is presumed, through practice, that French, German, Spanish, Latin, and Russian are the traditional examples of foreign language, and now under press from other international interests, the more exotic languages.

In terms of a valid definition, however, it can be argued that these examples indicate a definition of a rather restricted nature--one which assumes that the referant group for foreign language is a national or cultural one. There are other definitions--cutting across other areas of human endeavor, and using a referant of a different nature. One speaks of the language of the dance, or art, the talking drum of the Congo tribes, symbolic logic, electronic symbolization, braille or sign language, etc. Some other possibilities which might be considered are as follows:

1. 'Twas brillig and the slithy toves
   Did gyre and gimble in the wabe...

   Carroll, Lewis. Alice in Wonderland

2. $$p(Hi|E) = \frac{p(E|Hi)p(Hi)}{\sum_i p(E|Hi)p(Hi)}$$

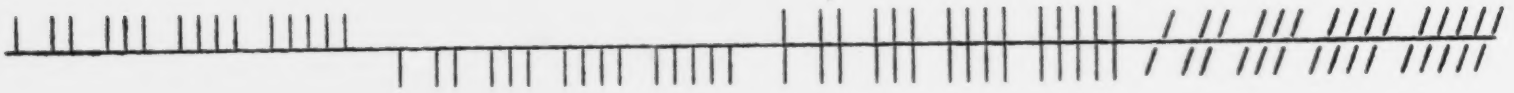
   Bayes theorem of invuse probability of language

3. 10011101001110100101101110111

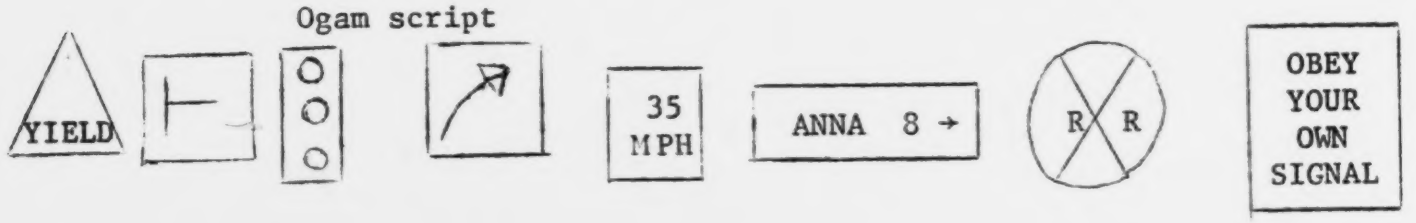
   Binary computer code

4. ---- - ——— -----

   HELP in Morse's original code

5. 

   Ogam script

6. 

7.

   Bicycle Built For Two

8. ~ ¶ □ [ ] ⌴ /\ V/\ = /\ =/ # tr wf S.C.

   Proofreader's marks

9. Pint, quart, peck, gill, gallon; inch, feet, yard, rod, furlong, mile; minim, dram, ounce, pound, ton; second, minute, degree; carat, pennyweight, ounce, pound, scruple; centigram, decigram, gram, decogram, hectogram, kilogram, myriagram, quintal, ton.

   Weights and measures

10. ♀ ♂ ∞ 0) (P F, * |* ≙ 5

    Biology

11. $CH_3 \cdot CHO$; Er PO_4; Ca $SO_4 \cdot 2H_2O$

    Chemistry

12. $, ¢, ₤, /, lb, @, %, a/c, B/L, c/d, c/o

Commerce

13. $\bar{A}$, ad, aq., C., coch., D., mac., p.c., p.r.n., q.d.

Medicine and pharmacy

14.
```
LØØP    CALL    MØTHER,(ANYTHING,NICE), ¥L
        MVC     ANYTHING, SØMETIME
        AR      5, 6
        BCT     9, LØØP
        LTR     15, 15
        BE      LØØP
```

Computer machine language

Objectives of Foreign Language Study:

It is obvious that one major educational objective of language study is related to some degree of fluency or proficiency in reading, writing, speaking and/or understanding the language. This objective is clearly stated at some institutions in terms of the Foreign Service Institute Quantitative Gradations of Fluency, in College Entrance Examination Board scores, or Modern Language Association Examination scores, but at most colleges, the criterion is expressed in terms of time or course equivalencies. There appear to be three areas of objectives:

(1) the skill area (fluency in the language itself)

(2) the literary area (knowledge and understanding of the literature, usually historic, of the nations represented by that language)

(3) the cultural area (knowledge, understanding, and empathy towards the people of the area)

Relative to all possible objectives, it is obvious that the areas selected for concentration eliminate, ignore, or under-emphasize others. Rarely, if ever, are the following considered or stated as objectives of language study:

(1) geography in depth, geology, natural resources

(2) economics or political economy

(3) religion or philosophy

(4) science or industrialization

(5) labor, population demography

(6) sociology, psychology, cultural history, archaeology

One can see, therefore, that objectives--after the language skill is mentioned--tend to aim toward a specific, perhaps biased, introduction into the culture. The aim seems to be heavily toward the study of literature (and certain types of literature only) without a representative sampling of the culture or language group as a whole. If one is to define or describe a culture objectively, in terms of the proportion of time spent by the people in pursuit of activity of one kind or another,

activities that encompass the greatest amount of time are NOT included in the cultural study through language. This situation can be demonstrated by comparing the content (i.e. cultural) of a language text and that of an anthropology text.

The content of syllabi of the required language courses can also be inspected to obtain notions of objectives. The skill area is well represented; the second most common element, from this author's subjective inspection, appears to be classical literature. Again, the examination system used in language courses represents practically the evaluated course objectives. An objective system of determining the major variables considered important within a language course has been employed. (Spencer, 1965.) In a study of the interrelationships among tested variables and grades obtained in courses, Spencer found the skill areas in language correlated as follows with course grades:

(1) Reading comprehension test scores correlated higher with grades than did listening test scores. The relationship between these variables does not vary significantly from level to level (101-104), or language to language.

(2) The departmental final examination scores relate to grades almost perfectly (average correlation = .90).

(3) Greater degrees of heterogeneity in performance (fluency) are evident as one progresses from 101 toward 104, with 104 levels containing the greatest heterogeneity, and 101 the greatest homogeneity.

(4) In those instances in which reading, listening, speaking and writing were tested reading relates most to grade, with writing capability second. Listening and speaking are least related.

It would appear from this study that the most emphasized objective in all language courses (101-104) is reading comprehension. Cultural aspects were not included to any significant degree, nor were literature questions emphasized.

Secondly, since the relationship between the skill test results and grades was so high, there appears to have been little chance for other variables to contribute to variance in grades.

Expressed objectives have been reported for University of Illinois language study by the Diggs Committee (1950) and Applebee (1968). Some of these are as follows:

(1) Use of a foreign language for the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge. (Applebee, p. 2)

(2) Learn more about another culture community. (Applebee, p. 2)

(3) To be able to read and appreciate literary works in the original language. (Applebee, p. 3)

(4) Contribute to world understanding. (Applebee, p. 3)

(5) Salutary effect upon the individual.

(6) Reduce cultural myopia in one's world view; reduce ethnocentrism. (Applebee, 1968)

(7) Contribute toward the liberalization of the individual.

(8) The "intrinsic value" of language study. (Diggs, p. 1)

(9) The pleasures inherent in communicating to a people in their own language. (Diggs, p. 3)

(10) Reduce the degree of strangeness or foreignness in attitudes toward other peoples. (Diggs, p. 3)

(11) "...train well-rounded human beings" with a world rather than a provincial outlook. (Diggs, p. 4)

(12) Awareness and sympathy for other peoples and cultures. (Diggs, p. 4)

(13) Knowledge and familiarity with what is beyond the border of our own country. (Diggs, p. 4)

(14) Modern man must have a second language to make the world free. (Diggs, p. 5)

(15) "...help free one of personal prejudices against the unknown, to liberate one from the idol of the cave." (Diggs, p. 5)

(16) Assist to enable a student to "...substitute understanding for blind dislike of these who do not speak English." (Diggs, p. 5)

(17) "...language courses can provide something unattainable otherwise." (Diggs, p. 6)

(18) Acquaint a student "...with the process of communicating with those who speak other languages." (Diggs, p. 6)

(19) "...help transform him from a provincial into a person with an essential awareness of the rest of the world." (Diggs, p. 7)

(20) "...language constitutes an excellent mental discipline." (Diggs, p. 7)

(21) To improve study habits, attitudes toward studying, a method of studying in general. (Diggs, p. 7)

(22) To develop "...a heightened sense of discrimination, an increased ability to choose from among alternatives and reason analytically about them." (Diggs, p. 7)

(23) "...knowledge of one language contributes materially to the mastery of another." (Diggs, p. 9)

(24) "...contribution to the knowledge of the structure and inflection of one's own mother tongue." "...lead to an awareness of meaning, nuance, and connotation..." (Diggs, p. 9)

(25) To contribute toward further study in literature, research, international trade, diplomacy, and military areas. (Diggs, p. 10)

(26) No other combination of 16 hours of study can accomplish all of these fundamental aims so well. (Diggs, p. 11)

These statements are not very complete, definitive, or clear when one wants to indicate the student behaviors associated with accomplishment. In order for an

objective to be useful, it must relate to some observable behavior which can distinguish the individuals who do from those who do not. An evaluation of the degree to which an instructional program is working in a desired direction is dependent, of course, on the definition of its objectives and the capability to observe results. There may be, as Stake (1967) suggests, two types of observation--formal and informal.

> "Informal evaluation is recognized by its dependence on casual observation, implicit goals, intuitive norms, and subjective judgement. Careful study reveals informal evaluation of education to be of variable quality--sometimes penetrating and insightful, sometimes superficial and distorted." (p. 523)

I am suggesting here that the above list of "objectives" is more or less a statement of hopes, ideals and visions--rather than statements of obtainable goals. It is difficult to break down these statements into useful behaviors. As Stake suggests:

> "The more common notion is to evaluate informally--to ask the opinion of the instructor, to ponder the logic of the program, or to consider the reputation of the advocates. Seldom do we search for relevant research reports or for behavioral data pertinent to the ultimate curricular decisions." Stake, 1967, p. 524.

In an adequate analysis of the foreign language program, it would seem that it is essential to determine if the stated goals (or defined renditions of them) are in fact obtained. A thorough study of the skill area in language (German, French, Spanish, and Russian at the U of I) was made by Spencer (1965). All students in 101, 102, 103, and 104 level courses were administered the Modern Language Association tests in Reading and Listening Comprehension; and many of the 103-104 courses were also given the Speaking and Writing tests. The results were as follows:

National Percentile Norms on the MLA Examination for U of I Foreign Language Courses

	Reading Comprehension		Listening Comprehension	
	102	104	102	104
French	63	76	60	78
German	90	89	79	83
Russian	73	75	56	--
Spanish	75	87	58	56

The table indicates the national norm percentile average obtained by the University of Illinois classes. In all cases the mean test results exceeded the norm average. These results are dependent, of course, on the degree to which the student body at the University of Illinois matches the students in the norm sample, with particular relation to selection, placement, previous language experience, academic aptitude, etc. There is little question that U of I achievement in the skill areas in foreign language is above average. It should be remembered that high levels of tested proficiency are a function not only of instructional competence, but the manner by which students are placed at the various course levels. Thus, high cut-off scores will result in high achievement levels. The degree of success of other aspects of the program such as culture, motivation, appreciation, and literature are unknown.

The Culture Objective:

It has been stated (Applebee, 1968; Diggs, 1950) that one of the major purposes of a foreign language requirement is to imbue the student with knowledge, empathy, or understanding toward peoples of other lands. This position is stated by Parker:

> "The strongest, most defensible reason for studying any foreign language (including Latin) is that such study, which is both a progressive experience and a progressive acquisition of a skill, the experience enlarges the pupils' mental horizon by introducing him to a completely new and different medium of verbal expression and communication and to a new cultural pattern (and, of course, progressively adds to his sense of pleasurable achievement in the process)." Parker, 1964.

Hamar states points of a similar nature:

> "In recent years I have often heard students (our own students returning from abroad) say that they did not really begin to understand themselves until they had lived for a time with people from an entirely different cultural background, that they did not begin to understand and appreciate the United States until they had lived in another country, that they did not begin to understand English grammar until they had studied the grammar of another language.... The student who has been abroad may not really understand better why he is what he is, but he realizes for the first time that he is different and that he shares these differences with all of the people of his own culture.... It is in the attempt to learn a foreign language that he first realizes deeply that language is artificial and arbitrary, that his own language is not the natural or sole repository of meaning. And thus he acquires an interest in language per se which may motivate him to master his own language--a thing he may never do if he assumes that he already understands his own language." Hamar, 1965, p. 406.

And Parker again:

> "Study of a modern foreign language fortunately enables one to break the bounds of his own peculiar culture..." Parker, 1964.

The question to which this report must address itself is: Is foreign language experience the only way in which such objectives can be met?

In the literature one finds little harmony in the response from researchers, or even language teachers. This lack of harmony is expressed, in part, by a rather constant review and change in language requirements.

Forkey writes:

> "...for there seems to be no general agreement on the inherent values of modern languages, anything but uniformity in language requirements (in colleges where there is such a requirement) and a constant state of flux within the colleges themselves, every year furnishing examples of some colleges doing away with requirements altogether, others restoring them and in the case of the requirement itself--lengthening it or shortening it according to the current modern language atmosphere prevailing." Forkey, 1955, p. 135.

Parker (1957) found a decrease in language requirements between 1930 and 1950 and an increase a la Sputnik.

Relative to college programs designed to teach understanding of other peoples through foreign language, Mac Allester (1953, p. 84) finds:

> "These programs in the schools would see, by and large, to have failed to achieve any appreciable effect."

Allen warns:

> "...foreign language learning is the key which can unlock the door to the understanding of another people's culture. Good. It is the key; it is not the door, still less is it the house beyond the door." Allen, 1955, p. 119.

Although Guthrie and Spencer (1965) found that Americans serving as technical assistants overseas supported knowledge of the language as an essential characteristic, no relationship was found between effectiveness and language fluency. As far as cultural problems were concerned, all inter-viewers recognized the cultural conflict. "But acknowledging cultural differences and coping with them effectively are not the same thing." (p. 55) No amount or type of previous educational experiences adequately prepared Americans for successful adaptation to an overseas position.

Many reports question the capability of a foreign language program to teach more than the language skill. Text material is criticized:

> "Some of our texts still reveal an evangelistic spirit which almost amounts to adulation." Johnson, 1955, p. 118.

> "Cultural materials in existing texts are properly criticized for being sometimes 'panoramic and encyclopedic,' sometimes concentrating upon 'the picturesque or upon insignificant oddities,' sometimes displaying 'a certain evangelistic fervor...transparent propaganda.'" Hecking, 1955, p. 116.

The time problem is mentioned:

> "...two years of language study--the time spent by the majority of our college students--is insufficient to develop an appreciation of the country's literature." Johnson, 1955, p. 118.

The capabilities of instructors:

> "...as a rule the language teacher is scarcely 'familiar with the foreign culture.' It is therefore doubtful that he could interpret or impart that culture, even if he were provided with all the erudite materials envisioned by the Report." Hecking, 1955, p. 117.

Problems of the cultural objective are mentioned by several authors. Nelson Brooks lists some of the variables indicative of knowledge of a culture--some of these are as follows:

> "Who is busy and who is idle.
> What people talk about most.
> What people value most.
> Who runs things in the home and in the community.
> Who the heroes are.
> What is taboo.
> What the character of the religion is and whether the gods are kind or cruel.
> What folk tales everyone knows.
> What modes of artistic expression are allowed and encouraged.
> What conduct wins general approval and what merits scorn and ridicule.
> What is considered fair and what unfair.
> What is considered funny.
> What procedures accompany the exchange of goods and services.
> What the important kinship ties are.
> What games are played and what pastimes enjoyed.
> What the role of music and dancing is.
> What the important feasts and celebrations are.
> What rites and ceremonies are observed at birth, adolescence, betrothal, marriage, and death.
> What the rules concerning courtships are.
> What people do to 'get even' if they feel they are injured.
> What is done about the treatment of disease.
> Who fights, how and about what.
> What the taut assumptions and unquestioned practices are."
> Brooks, 1960, p. 83-84.

As far as reading these objectives, Brooks further states that:

> "When we inspect the currently available textbooks that presume to review the culture of the people whose languages are most frequently studied in our schools and colleges, we are forced to the conclusion that both authors and publishers have operated without benefit of the anthropologist's concept of the word... these books present, in picture and in print, little more than the colorful, the quaint, and the inoffensive." Brooks, 1960, p. 88.

> "...our examinations are concerned almost exclusively with teaching the skills of reading, translation, composition, oral expression, aural comprehension, and a knowledge of literature. As a result, students pay scant attention to the material of a cultural nature." Johnson, 1955, p. 118.

> "If, then, foreign language study is to contribute to a broad understanding of other nations and cultures it must rely on materials not only linguistically suitable but systematically and explicitly designed to reveal the distinctive qualities of the related culture." Wheeler, 1955, p. 115.

Nostrand states:

> "Without assistant from cultural anthropologists, sociologists, and social psychologists, the language teacher cannot deal confidently with such a delicate and complex objective as cross-cultural understanding, for example." Nostrand, 1963, p. IX.

Guthrie and Spencer (1965), in a study of American technical assistants operating abroad, concluded:

> "While everyone agreed that it would be desirable for all assistants to learn the language, they are sure that it is not essential for all of them, nor are we convinced that there was in many instances much increase in effectiveness with improved mastery of the language." P. 41.

These various findings, opinions, and hopes can hardly be said to show unanimity. There appear to be several points of concentration:

(1) Foreign language study contributes or does not contribute to better cultural knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the specific foreign culture, or of foreign cultures in general.

(2) Foreign language study is the only method, or one of the methods, or a poor method of teaching cultural understanding.

(3) Foreign language programs are well fitted to teach these experiences, or they are not. The language study is a skill subject or it is a wide-scale cultural subject.

There is little evidence on hand to contribute to answers toward these questions. One may point, however, that since the instructors have little background in the culture, the textbook material is inadequate for this area, the time for

teaching both language and culture is too short for an adequate proficiency in either, and the examinations represent little in terms of cultural expectations for the student, little hope for wide scale cultural understanding can be developed. Carroll's suggestion seems most appropriate:

> "What is needed now is a series of small-scale, carefully controlled educational experiments in which some of the best minds in linguistics, foreign-language teaching, psychology, education, experimental design, and measurement would be brought to bear on the problem." Carroll, 1961, p. 187.

The argument for or against a foreign language requirement must rest, therefore, on the assumption that the program teaches the language and little else. A second hopeful possibility is that by learning a language, secondary attributes are also learned. Let us look for a moment at this alternative.

In terms of transfer of training to another language:

> "The studies made to date...have not controlled adequately for language aptitude. That is to say, they have collected data on students who elected a second foreign language; such students are likely to be those who have been successful in studying their first foreign language and have therefore ipso facto demonstrated a degree of aptitude which will also predict success in the second foreign language." Carroll, 1963, p. 1090.

Jacobovits (1968) states:

> "...there is one ultimate benefit that receives universal concensus. This is that foreign language study increases cultural awareness, reduces ethnocentrism, and is an effective 'antidote to cultural myopia.' Despite the undisputed status of this benefit, foreign language teachers often remain skeptical. It may be instructive to examine in some detail the arguments that some writers here use relative to this question." Pp. 31-32.

Evidence to support the "cultural awareness" objective to foreign language study is tenuous at best.

The consideration that language is the only, or the essential component in cultural understanding is indeed questionable. Witness, for example, the myriad distribution of languages across the world, some 3000 as reported by Whatmough (1957, p. 55). Obviously one has time to become proficient in few languages at best (even to become proficient in one is questionable). One must also assume, based on the

reports of writers quoted in this report, that transfer of training is limited. The majority of students study French, Spanish, German, or Latin within which significant degrees of transfer is possible (through cognates and homogeneity in some history). Transfer to Asian, African, or Indian languages is much less possible. Association with nationals of another country after graduation is again limited and the probability of a direct association with those nationals who speak the language that one has studied (or even a cognate of it) are very improbable. It would seem then that educational objectives related to the cultural awareness variable should be aimed at a practical realization that one will NOT know the language; he will probably deal to a much greater extent with literature in translation rather than in its original form; and that he will need to learn the cultural communication skills toward those of a nation or cultural group he did NOT specifically study.

Secondly, for the vast majority of our students, a B.A. degree is a terminal one. The cultural or international experiences in the undergraduate program are, by and large, even with the great increases in international travel, the last formal association with anything international. The intent of our foreign language program, as was stated earlier, seems to be designed toward the training of scholars or researchers. It should be remembered that this is a minority--a considerable minority--of our students, most of whom will never leave the continental boundaries of the United States, and if they do, will travel to nations whose people speak languages with which they have had no experience.

The objectives of a cultural component in a liberal arts curriculum should, it would seem, point in the direction of the majority, not the minority. The study of language, as a tool, as a representation of thought or culture, as a means to an end, as a mechanism of communication, its similarities and differences in practice around the world, as a component in politics and nation-building, would seem worthwhile. To pin one's hopes on one language, to accomplish all of these aims, would appear to be rather naive.

One may easily build an argument against the language/culture objective by analogy of Portugese in Portugal vs. Portugese in Angola--it does not represent the same cultural component in each of the two countries. Similarly, Spanish in Mexico, or Bolivia, or Argentina, as a representation of the (or "a") culture, is completely inadequate. Which language represents India, where there are 700 varieties; Afghanistan with 22 or China--would one study Cantonese, Mandarin, or what? Our historical orientation toward France, Germany, and Spain may tend to limit our modern intercultural relationships. Are we perhaps biased toward traditional values of Western Civilization, to the exclusion of other, more prominent cultures of today?

> "...there is little agreement as to the proper objectives of language teaching, that second-language instruction does not always conform to its conceived objectives, and that the evaluation of any method of instruction must be made in the light of the objectives it presumes to attain." Brooks, 1960, p. 169.

To base the study of culture on a premise of studying its language (written) or its literature (and only certain types of literature) performs at the stroke of the proverbial pen an inclusion/exclusion dichotomy of rather vast dimensions. Literate cultures can be partially studied in this manner; illiterate ones cannot. Thus, some of the major examples of cultural diversity, cultural change, and historical influences have been struck from the range of perception and consideration. Secondly, to rely on language (really only a codified, mechanical system of making permanent record of an oral speech pattern, recognizing that written language is always historically less in tune with the oral language and culture at any one time) as the only means of the study of a culture makes a great many assumptions. For example, it is assumed that:

(1) Language represents the same level of sophistication within that culture as it does within any other culture--a belief in a homogeneity of the level of development and use of language systems.

(2) The language in a culture represents to the same extent the attitudes and value patterns (between language and the culture/personalities it signifies) to similar degrees for each culture. In this way of thinking, Sumer (which is largely a commercial literature) is equated with Mayan--commerce and religion--both of which are equated with Old English.

(3) The proportion of events in a culture which reach a written stage are similar across cultures. Therefore, Greek, which seems to contain writings of all walks of life presumably due to the extensive mobility of the population through commerce, war, immigration, etc., is equated with Mayan--which represents a completely non-mobile civilization.

(4) The degree to which a cultural society had values associated with the role of verbal/written expression is equal; i.e. that the need and desire for and toward a written language is assumed to be equal across cultures.

(5) The writers in each culture represented a homogeneous class, or social status within that population, so that he who wrote in Greek society wrote about the same thing, from the same point of view, from the same location on the social side, being in a position to perceive, notice and record similar things of similar importance as these from another culture.

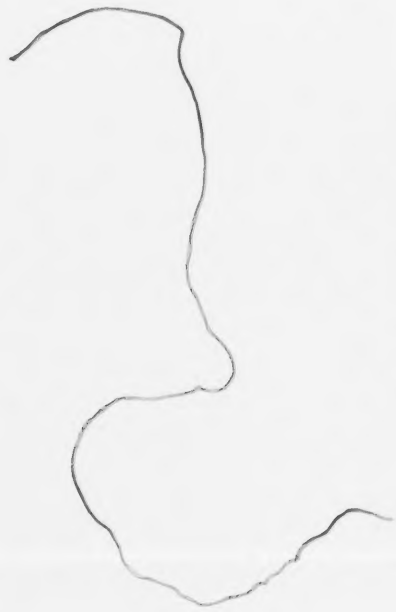
That these assumptions are false is obvious. Thucydides wrote about the Peloponnesian Wars because, in the first place, the war occurred; the capability of free time to an historian was available in the culture; literary patronage was available in the social system. Cultures inhabiting less hospitable geography, bent on physical survival also had a literature, but little time, inclination or reason to write about the same topics, or with the same degree of freedom.

Thus the study of cultures through language, although certainly efficient, presents two sources of bias to the cultural scholar--internal and external. The internal bias revolves around the degree to which the literature represents the totality of the society, written by reliable authors who have biases of their own. Externally, the scholar would obtain different views of society written by individuals differing in class rank, importance, function, perceptual awareness, and capability--each containing varying degrees of freedom of expression, responsibility, purpose, and, unfortunately, bias. One merely has to read the various accounts, written by different authors, of a single event--the Conquest of Mexico for one. When there are various accounts, the scholar, or the learner, may get multiple exposure, try to understand the position and bias of each author, and piece together a representation of what really happened. Validity is always questionable. But what if there is only one piece of written literature? In most cases, the older the culture, the more limited the amount of writing. Even, however, the Battle of Gettysburg from a Union or Confederate reporter, a hundred years ago, presents widely different reports of what happened, by whom, how many, and even who won.

Similarly, the audience for which a literature is written determines in part its degree of accuracy, its bias, its degree of inclusiveness. Reporting for Louis XIV, or Madame Dufarge, might tend to temper what is said; suppose all that remained of Western Civilization was the literature of the Nazi propoganda machine, or Tass, or the Chicago Daily News?

Literature, like news, and language, like mathematics and the computer, is a tool--not an end in itself. Used as a tool, to help construct a house of culture, it is useful and purposeful. To use it as the only tool is to try to build a house by using the talents of only one worker.

"...the extension of the French language has certainly increased since the sixteenth century, while the range of extension of the Basque language has probably decreased during the same period. And neither of these languages can be considered as coextensive with the French society geographically located in the territory of France, for the vast majority of inhabitants of France do not know any Basque, while the French language is used far beyond France--in Canada, in the French colonies, and quite often among the diplomatic and aristocratic sets of other countries."
Znaniecki, 1963, p. 139.



Motivation and Interest in Foreign Language Learning:

All will agree that interest in a subject is conducive to learning. One may take two differing views on the subject, however.

(1) The subject interest is useful, and it is up to the student to develop it, or perish.

(2) It is up to the subject content to develop interest, and if it fails, let the student pursue study in another field.

The first policy is representative of what might be termed an autocratic one, the second less autocratic. Interest and motivation in foreign language learning has been studied by a number of authors, for example:

> "...the student's attitude toward language study and toward speakers of the language he is studying can have profound influences over and above those of aptitude." Carroll, 1963, p. 1090.

One cannot study motivation independently from achievement; students self-select themselves into and out of foreign language study, for example:

> "Students with two years of high school instruction and one year of college instruction do about equally well on tests (MLA Cooperative Foreign Language Tests), but students with four years of high school instruction do slightly better than students with two years of college instruction. This is no doubt attributable to a great degree to the fact that four years of high school instruction is, as a rule, offered in superior high schools and the best and most serious students of the language take the fourth year of instruction. The same level of ability and seriousness of purpose are not always present in college students completing a required second year of language study." Bryan, 1966, p. 8.

> "It is our contention then that achievement in a second language is dependent upon essentially the same type of motivation that is apparently necessary for the child to learn his first language. We argue that an individual acquiring a second language adopts certain behavior patterns which are characteristic of another cultural group and that his attitude towards that group will at least partly determine his success in learning the new language." Gardner and Lambert, 1959, p. 267.

> "Even more typical is the product of our schools who has had desultory practice in hearing and speaking the second language, but who, hampered by the learning of vocabulary lists and constant translation from one language to the other, has been successfully prevented from acquiring a different set of verbal habits for the new language. The transition from no language to one language is universal and is generally accomplished in the first five or six years of life. Clearly all can learn a first language, for all do. Could all learn a second language? We do not know." Brooks, 1960, p. 41-42.

Wallace Lambert and his colleagues has conducted a number of experiments on the "Roles of Attitudes and Motivation in Second Language Learning." These studies show that:

> "...the student who has enthnocentric or prejudiced attitudes toward foreign peoples and who makes invidious comparisons of French with American ways of life is likely to do poorly in school French and in some aspects of comprehension, independent of any intellectual capacity or motivation to do well in French." Lambert, 1961, p. 36.

A further study shows that:

> "American students of English-speaking backgrounds who are in the process of studying the French language have a generally negative set of stereotypes about the basic personality characteristics of French-speaking people.' Lambert 1961, p. 132

> "Prejudices of this type against French-speaking people impart a negative valence to learning their language." Rivers, 1964, p. 140.

Rivers also states:

> "It cannot be assumed that the long range goal of eventual conversational facility in a foreign language, or the immediate goal of being correct in an ulterance, will of themselves be sufficient incentive, or be perceived as sufficiently rewarding, to carry a... student over months of tedious drill and meticulous sound-discrimination exercises." Rivers, 1964, p. 58.

The foreign language program not only must concern itself with motivating students to learn a language, but also finds itself entwined with a whole set of existing attitudes and prejudices--which are not necessarily removed by the language study; in fact, for the lower level student, might become enhanced and reinforced by such study.

There appears to be some question (see Jacobovits, 1968) as to whether the foreign language program motivates students or vice versa. Elsewhere it has been shown (Spencer, 1966) that majors and minors in French are more motivated (and more successful) in French than are regular students. The tendency seems to be that the students who do well in a subject become motivated to continue that subject and continue to do well in it. We have no evidence, however, that the study of a subject "causes" motivation and interest in it.

To indicate some of the motivational, non-intellectual and experiential components of language learning (as opposed to tested achievement obtained on placement tests) a Foreign Language Questionnaire was developed by R. E. Spencer of the Office of Instructional Resources, University of Illinois. Fifty-five items were developed logically as reasonable predictors of foreign language interest and success, e.g. travel experience, high school courses grades and years of study, etc. The Foreign Language Questionnaire was administered to students enrolled as follows, during the first week of classes, Fall, 1965:

	Total Enrollment	Total Tested	Percent Tested
French	1766	1402	79.4%
German	1421	1042	73.3%
Latin	158	117	74.1%
Russian	250	202	80.8%
Spanish	1082	940	87.2%

Each language group was analyzed separately, a key developed for each language independently, and then a key for all languages was found. The Questionnaires were then scored on the basis of the key and those scores related to grades achieved in the various courses. The correlations (validity coefficients) were as follows:

	Validity Coefficient	Corrected for Alternatives	Reliability KR-4
French	.516	.595	.636
German	.498	.590	.519
Latin	.418	.500	-
Russian	.352	.414	-
Spanish	.509	.580	.664

To compare these results, based up n self-report questionnaire techniques, to the usual academic, achievement prediction system is rather interesting. Although we have not used both procedures together yet to yield a combination of intellectual plus non-intellective predictive formulae, the comparison of the two should indicate that motivational, aptitude attitude, interest and experiential variables do exist: (the grade earned in 101, 102, 103, or 104 served as the criterion for the correlations)

	Restricted Range Zero Order Correlations With Placement Exams		Multiple R FGE, HSPR, P/P	
	Read	List		
French	.23	.20	.51	N = 450
German	.21	.20	.50	N = 250
Russian*	.46	.28	.90	N = 30
Latin*	.07	-	.70	N = 80
Spanish	.26	.22	.54	N = 230

(The highest set of predictors excludes the MLA placement tests)

*Russian and Latin should be questioned because of a low N.

It would seem, then, that variables other than mere academic factors can control and influence foreign language learning.

As Carroll states:

> "We must consider the student's age, his intelligence, his 'aptitude for language,' his motivation, his prior experiences with languages (including his own), and so on. Even these factors have to be considered in relation to the purposes and methods of instruction." Carroll, 1961, p. 170.

Some other interesting data was found in these questionnaire responses. The proportion of student responses to the following set of items related to interest, aptitude, and motivation and presented: (R = Russian, S = Spanish, G = German, F = French, L = Latin

R	S	G	F	L	
					22. How would you describe your language learning aptitude.
12%	7%	7%	8%	6%	Excellent
31%	19%	27%	22%	25%	Superior
48%	54%	52%	56%	60%	Average
7%	16%	11%	11%	7%	Poor
1%	5%	3%	2%	1%	Very Poor
					27. Which of the following has been taught best?
30%	23%	34%	29%	27%	Math
19%	27%	18%	24%	26%	English
16%	19%	12%	17%	16%	Social Studies
8%	7%	5%	7%	9%	Foreign Language
26%	24%	31%	22%	21%	Science
					29. Which of these areas are you most interested in?
18%	12%	16%	15%	15%	Math
9%	18%	11%	21%	19%	English
19%	38%	20%	27%	26%	Social Studies
21%	10%	5%	12%	9%	Foreign Language
31%	21%	47%	24%	31%	Science

R	S	G	F	L	3. Which do you think will be most useful to you in your professional career.
22%	12%	16%	15%	10%	Math
10%	26%	15%	27%	19%	English
18%	33%	17%	22%	28%	Social Studies
19%	8%	5%	10%	7%	Foreign Language
31%	21%	47%	25%	36%	Science

On questions related to whether students felt their curriculum should include a foreign language, there was only about 50% agreement.

A foreign language questionnaire was distributed by the LAS Student Council with the following results (only pertinent questions are listed; 900 questionnaires were tabulated):

3. Were your grades in language lower than your grades in other courses outside your major field?

YES 215 NO 660

7. Has the time spent in the language lab been beneficial to your study of language?

YES 174 NO 694

9a. Do you feel that you have to study more for a language course (per credit hr.) than for other courses?

YES 719 NO 154

9b. If so, do you feel that this is unfair?

YES 572 NO ---

10. Do you read any material voluntarily in the language you are taking or have taken?

YES 254 NO 637

11. Has the language requirement prevented you from taking other courses in which you were interested?

YES 554 NO 332

13. Do you plan to be able to use the foreign language which you studied to meet graduate school requirements?

YES 397 NO 484

16. Has foreign language study helped you to develop discipline or learn better study habits?

YES 154 NO 732

17a. Do you approve of the present foreign language requirement in LAS?

YES 211 NO 684

17b. Do you think more language should be required or less?

MORE 57 LESS 726

18. What is your attitude toward foreign language study?

INTERESTED 328 STUDY PRIMARILY FOR THE GRADE 559

20. Would you prefer the alternative of taking a two-semester sequence on the literature (in English translation) of the language rather than 103 and 104 of the language?

YES 604 NO 279

21a. Overall do you think that your study of foreign language here has been beneficial or detrimental to you?

BENEFICIAL 458 DETRIMENTAL 365

One can see considerable degrees of expressed student dissatisfaction with either the foreign language requirement, the methods of instruction (language laboratory), or its benefits.

In another attitudinal study, the Illinois Course Evaluation Questionnaire was administered to 212 sections of French, German, Spanish, and Russian in 1965. The following are decile results (0 being the lowest 10%, 9 the highest):

Language	German	French	Spanish	Russian
CEQ Subscores				
Overall Attitude	3	2	2	5
Method of Instruction	4	3	3	4
Content	2	2	2	4
Interest/Attention	3	3	3	5
Instructor	5	5	3	5
Specific Items	4	4	2	4
TOTAL	4	3	3	5
N	1341	868	1120	191

One can observe that the deciles tend to be below normal, particularly in French and Spanish. Russian tends to be a special case, since students do not normally take Russian unless they indicate a special interest in it. German consistently enrolls students with higher academic aptitude, more of whom are headed for graduate schools and professional training of some kind.

If the assumptions and objectives of foreign language/cultural learning are true there is one element in existence to test its validity. During the past twenty years or so, more Americans have traveled overseas, both during wars, foreign aid missions, junior year abroad programs, and as tourists. More communication about other cultures has occurred in magazines, newspapers, radio, and television, and greater numbers of people have gone to college and studied foreign language. What then have been the societal manifestations of this unprecedented intercultural experience? The following seem to be evidenced:

the continual lack of support for foreign aid with a gradual reduction in budget

a sincere lack of support for the UN and its missions

a growing isolationism, reminicent of the 1920's

a strong desire to become disengaged militarily with other nations and treaties

a growing conviction that involvement with other nations leads to disaster, discomfort, and a general unrewarding experience

a social attitude more antagonistic to people of other cultures

a lowering of foreign student acceptencies (proportionately) to US colleges and universities

a considerable concern relative to whether we are welcomed abroad, either commercially or personally--our "friends" abroad seem to be declining in number rather than increasing (see The Ugly American, The Nation of Sheep, etc.)

higher degrees of superiority feeling among Americans in comparison to empathy toward people in other places

The program of lowering ethnocentrism, provincialism, and myopia has obviously not worked. The voting population of today (WW II veterans) have seen and had personal experience with more foreign cultures than at any other time in our history (albeit under less than perfect conditions). Their voting behavior, their editorials and popular articles, certainly do not point in the direction of less isolationism.

One may argue that the educational preparation was inadequate on many grounds--not long enough or extensive enough; and that we should require more rather than less as a result of the above analysis. This may be true but would not seem logical. Even with a limited amount, a direction ought be clear--the opposing viewpoint should not be supported by the already existing levels of endeavor.

One of the most valid ways in which motivation and interest can occur is by having those involved become part and parcel of the educational process. Requirements, more today than ever before, may be considered evidences of autocratic educationalism and authorianistic indoctrinalism. The student knows himself better today than at any other time in educational history. He is brighter, more mature, and more capable. If he is given no voice in the alternative approaches to obtaining a liberal education, his motivation and interest may be more negative, if not rebellious, than helpful. One cannot support a doctrine of complete student control over curriculum; but similarly, neither can one support the traditional view of complete college control over curriculum. The students' views, interests, attitudes, and feelings should be considered an essential criteria for curricula orientation. It is obvious that the curricula is not going to supply these characteristics for him--he will supply the interest, motivation and perseverance to succeed in whatever system of hurdles we establish for him. Our responsibility, it seems, would be to insure that the hurdles are valid ones.

We are already faced with a degree of failure which ought to insure considerable degrees of anxiety. Only 30% of our entering freshmen in LAS complete graduation within four years. One may believe that those that we lose deserve to be lost, or

one may believe that we should do as much as we can to as many as we can. Unfortunately, those we lose include many of superior standing, ability, and aptitude. How many we lose because of invalid hurdles ought be of considerable interest (Spencer, Richard E., 1968).

In a recent experimental administration of the College and University Environmental Scales* in the College of LAS the sample responding (N = 279) rated the college at the 26th percentile on Community score and the 5th percentile on Propriety (the two lowest of six scores). The following definitions of these two scores were considered unrepresentative of the University of Illinois.

> Community is defined as the degree to which the campus is a friendly, cohesive, group oriented place--supportive and sympathetic. There is a feeling of group welfare and loyalty which encompasses the college as a whole. It has a congenial atmosphere.
>
> Propriety is defined as an environment that is polite and considerate; caution and thoughtfulness are evident. Group standards of decorum are important--absence of demonstrative, assertive, rebellious, risk-taking, inconsiderate, convention-flouting behavior.

Responses showed high agreement in areas of scholarships and practicality--but seriously low ratings on community and propriety. One could paraphrase these results to indicate a kind of conservativeness (ethnocentric, myopic?) environment. Is it possible that what we state as educational objectives we do not permit as student behavior? Requirements, to the degree that they are rigid, represent ethnocentrism, not liberalism, be they entrance or graduation requirements.

The student committees on campus and the faculty senate have recently been active in support of a liberalization of college and university requirements.

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*College and University Environmental Scales, Princeton, New Jersey, Educational Testing Service.

In the University of Illinois Campus Report of June 1, 1968, reform proposals were submitted by Charles Wert to the Senate Committee of Educational Policy. Point 3a is as follows:

> "Easier approval route for modification of stated curricula. Their phrase was routine exception to rules. Although the faculty considers the petition to be a valid reasonable route the students generally detest it and in their view it is degrading, time consuming, ineffective, and usually leads to either a run-around or to buck-passing. They believe that the major decision on request for curriculum modifications should be made at the lowest possible level, the advisor."

The introduction of the culturally deprived student (in mass) to the campus in Fall, 1968, is proving to be an experience of considerable liberalization--relative to placement practices, new course development, a more pointed study of individual student needs vs. college course offering, probationary rules, minimum credits per semester, etc. The State of California recently passed a bill through the legislation which legally obtained exemptions for the foreign language requirement for individuals who:

(1) are native speaking of another language and are having difficulty with English,

(2) study foreign language in private classes, and

(3) students who cannot profit from a foreign language program.

The Uniqueness of Foreign Language Learning:

College and curriculum requirements are considered and stated in ways which assume that learning is a rather homogeneous experience. Many decades ago it was discovered that major differences could be identified between learning verbal vs. quantitative content. The major selection examinations used in higher education today (ACT, SAT) and the academic prediction tests (SCAT, DAT, etc.) recognize this attribute by reporting separate scores for these two factors. Although there is a significant relationship between the two, there is also sufficient uniqueness to require separation of the two areas. Prediction of success in an instructional program therefore depends not only on characteristics of the student, but also on characteristics of the instructional program. For numerical or quantitative studies, the examination scores in quantitative aptitude, ability or achievement are most predictive; while for verbal areas (English, Rhetoric, language, etc.), scores on verbal reasoning, word fluency, English usage, etc. are most predictive, (See Lavin, 1965) as might be expected.

To recognize these differences in student charactistics, most colleges and universities adopt placement and guidance programs which differentiate and consider separately mathematics and verbal areas. The University of Illinois, for example, independently places students in mathematics, (on the basis of the CEEB Mathematics Placement test), and in English (on the basis of the CEEB English Comprehension Placement test), with considerable degrees of accuracy. It is also found that measures of these two variables assist in adequate placement and guidance into areas of physical science (using mathematics as a major contributor), and in social science (using English).

It seems perfectly plausible, therefore, that some students can do well in some areas, while doing poorly in others. Although there exists a generalized

capability in "academic" areas, sufficient uniqueness exists to warrant differential consideration for differential abilities. If it can be shown that foreign language learning contains unique characteristics as well, similar differential consideration in this area would be warranted.

Gardner and Lambert (1965) found this uniqueness:

> "This study demonstrates that measures of intelligence are relatively independent of both language aptitude and second language achievement, and moreover, that different second language skills are related to different abilities. A factor analysis of 24 variables (N = 96 high school students) yielded seven orthogonal factors. Four of these were compared primarily for indexes of second language skills suggesting relatively independent dimensions of achievement." P. 191.

And as Carroll states:

> "...facility in learning to speak and understand a foreign language is a fairly specialized talent...relatively independent of those traits ordinarily included under intelligence...." 1963, p. 1088.

To validate this finding, and to determine its applicability at the University of Illinois, the author ran a similar study. Table III presents the results of a factor analysis on University of Illinois freshmen, Fall, 1966. These results indicate quite conclusively that foreign language achievement is to a considerable degree independent from verbal and mathematical achievement.

Table III

Rotated Factor Analysis Results of Freshmen Guidance Selection and Placement Examinations, Fall, 1966, University of Illinois

(N=753)

	I	II	III
ACT English	.53	.15	.29
ACT Mathematics	.28	.87	-.01
ACT Social Sciences	.73	.20	.11
ACT Natural Sciences	.64	.34	.03
SCAT Verbal	.80	.13	.30
SCAT Quantitative	.28	.88	.01
Read Vocal	.75	.11	.31
Read Speed	.70	.07	-.03
Read Compreshension	.86	.15	.04
Math II	.09	.88	.13
Math I	.11	.89	.09
MLA Read	.14	.05	.90
MLA List	.22	.06	.89
	(Verbal)	(Quant)	(Language)

These data would indicate, then, that it would be quite reasonable to expect otherwise good students (upon occasion) to show success in many academic areas while showing failure in foreign language. The reverse, of course, is also possible. This would tend to support the possibilty of developing an adequate method of determining potential failures.

Similar evidence can be gathered on individuals who tend to be eye-minded or ear-minded. Pimsleur states, for example, that six students out of every 30 are under achievers. Teachers tend to ascribe a student's difficulty either to lack of diligence or simply to a lack of talent. According to Pimsleur's investigation there exists a talent for learning foreign languages, a special factor beyond intelligence and industriousness which accounts for how well an individual succeeds in a language course. This may be auditory ability or some other kind of characteristic. Motivation, attitudes, and personality are also at work.

Methodology of Teaching Foreign Language and Individual Differences:

Although the University of Illinois LAS requirement in foreign language (for graduation) states the criteria in terms of "...a reading knowledge...," the foreign language departments have been audio-lingually oriented in recent years. Similarly, strictly reading courses (such as French "starred") courses have been dropped from the departmental offerings. This disparity between the requirement, as stated, and the instructional practice probably stems from the belief that the audio-lingual method is the most efficient pedogogical approach to the teaching of foreign languages. This results in the use of a language laboratory. There is not unanimity in the field relative to the audio-lingual approach. As Carroll (1961, p. 186) states "...no method succeeds with all students." In a comparison of the traditional (grammar-translation) approach, and the audio-lingual method, Carroll also states:

> "No method has emerged as clearly the best method, and there seems to be no end to the arguments as to the proper objectives of foreign-language instruction in our schools." 1961, p. 186.

and more importantly

> "...methods being compared are differentially effective for different types of students--that is, that one method is more effective for certain kinds of students and the other is more effective for other kinds of students." Carroll, 1961, p. 179.

The language laboratory itself, as a part and parcel of the audio-lingual method, has come under considerable criticism. For example:

> "...no clear cut evidence that one type of language laboratory is superior to another. The routine use of complex and expensive laboratory equipment may be questionable." Mueller, 1967, p. 351.

In a major study of the effectiveness of the language laboratory the following information was found:

> "More than five thousand students of French in twenty-one school districts of the Metropolitan School Study Council were tested in three language skills: reading comprehension, listening comprehension, and speech production. The total number of students was distributed among two groups, a language laboratory group and a no-laboratory group at each of four levels of experience, that is, years of French instruction. In only one instance,

that of speech production scores at Level I, was there found a significant difference that favored the language laboratory group. Significant differences that favored the no-laboratory group predominated and appeared in connection with each language skill tested. When comparisons were made using students within the same I.Q. band, or class, significant differences favoring the no-laboratory group of students were found almost exclusively with students at the upper end of the I.Q. distribution. Thus, at least in this study, high I.Q. students were found to be the most severely disadvantaged by the inclusion of the laboratory in the instructional program. Students of average I.Q. were found, within the limits of the measures and comparisons made in this study, to be relatively unaffected by the inclusion of the laboratory in the instructional program.

> While this study does not purport to demonstrate that the language laboratory cannot be used effectively, it does show that in schools of the Metropolitan School Study Council, a group of schools characterized by competent and well-prepared teachers, better results in certain important skills areas are being achieved in instructional situations which do not use the language laboratory." Keating, 1963, p. 39.

The major findings of language laboratory studies (see Jacobovits, 1968) appear to indicate that students do not automatically benefit from one type of instructional program. Some can benefit from an oral approach--some evidently do not. Our program in foreign language instruction does not take into account these student differences. Nor does the college requirement account for the possibility of the specialized nature of foreign language learning. Alternative routes to meeting the college requirement or in learning foreign language are not now available.

The orientation of the requirement, and its instructional operation, assumes, therefore:

> "In the one type of motivation, currently most commonly expected of college students, the emphasis is entirely upon the student. He either comes equipped to perform in the classroom as expected or else he fails." Roeming, 1967, p. 415.

The student is expected to fit into the program as it is. According to our data, therefore, the student who lacks the talent to learn languages is expected to fail, and can be predicted to fail, because of a characteristic over which he has no control. As Carroll states "...we are fundamentally ignorant of the psychology of language learning." 1961, p. 287.

Part of this problem is based on the college's attitudes relative to the criteria itself.

> "...there seems to be an assumption, when we are talking about foreign language teaching, that all foreign language learners are in some sense equal in their own language." Carroll, 1953, p. 7-8.

The distribution of scores on the University of Illinois selection and admissions tests should shed light on this problem. Similarly, the requirement for differential placement into English courses (101*, 101, 102, 108, etc.) indicates wide variance in the capability of our students to handle their own language. What is needed is:

> "...an analysis of individual differences in pupils with respect to their needs and abilities in the language arts--as a basis for the adaption of instruction to the individual child." Carroll, 1961, p. 144.

It can hardly be expected that a person who has difficulty in carrying on a conversation in his own language can learn to do so in a foreign language with any great degree of success.

> "If a person has been reared in a given culture, his own culture, for most of his life and still can not carry on a very satisfactory conversation, there is very little reason to suppose that he can ever do this in a second language." Carroll, 1953, p. 9.

The bases for the audio-lingual approach seems to have been the experiences of language training during World War II. It is well to keep in mind, however, some differences between that program and the college foreign language situation. The analogy often taken of the Army language teaching experience in teaching foreign languages is inappropriate to college and university problems. As Forkey states:

> "...candidates for the courses were picked for linguistic aptitude, something every student, as modern language teachers know only too well, does not possess. They were then given intensive courses which took up all the students' available time, a condition which can not, of course, be duplicated today in any liberal arts program." 1955, p. 189.

If our present requirements in the college are to be followed, it would seem logical, then, to select students who have the talent for foreign language learning

(audio-lingually taught). Unfortunately, such a selection system would eliminate from entrance some students whose capability in other areas of academic endeavor are fairly high--it would eliminate many potential successes in mathematical/physical science areas, as well as in English/social science areas.

Morgan found that:

> "...it is possible by means of careful, individual study of a student's psychological folder to derive reasonably accurate predictions of language achievement." 1953, p. 17.

Roeming, editor of the Modern Language Journal, in an editorial relative to language learning indicated that for some students "...classroom English is a second language." 1967, p. 415. Further, he states:

> "Who is this individual student? Unfortunately, he is no longer the progeny of a well-established family in which cultural orientation towards learning is stimulated and personal achievement is a responsibility that can not be shunned. This person has not existed in terms of ninetienth century student models since the depression modified the concept of individual economic responsibility and its attendent moral codes." Roeming, 1967, p. 413.

and

> "...the contemporary student no longer resembles in any way his predecessor of forty years ago. Nor is it possible to find one prototype for the vast contemporary student population." Roeming, 1967, p. 413.
>
> "'What is the nature of the language student?' has not been a major concern of the foreign language specialist." Roeming, 1967, p. 412.

Any consideration of a requirement, either for entrance or graduation, it seems should be conducted relative to its own merits, rather than criteria or experieces of other times and places. Similarly, a requirement which would exclude some sudents from obtaining a college education because of a relative inability in any single area would seem to place a degree of importance on that area which would require strong validation. Since first experience in foreign languages usually occurs in junior or senior high school (forgetting for the moment the minority f

students who study foreign language in elementary school--8% at the University of Illinois) a self-selection system, governed by the student himself, may already be in operation. Two methods are possible:

(1) Under the impression that most colleges require high school foreign language for entrance, which is false, many potential college students may reconsider college plans because of failure in foreign language.

(2) Because of difficulty in foreign language, students may spend an inordinate amount of time on that subject (which still may result in failure) and thus do less well in those subjects for which talent is available. His overall high school record may suffer, therefore, and he may become inadmissable into college, for:

> "For some students the difficulty they encounter in the foreign language class is their first real problem in school. It may be severe enough to force a re-evaluation of their academic plans and may have a lasting effect on the individual concerned." Pimsleur, P.; Sundland, D. M.; and McIntyre, R. D.; 1966, p. 1.

In graduate colleges, as was said previously, alternative procedures to fulfill a language requirement are becoming more common. In a study by Admussen (1967) it was noted that, "No school has increased its language requirement." (p. 347) in the period studied, either graduate or undergraduate. Instead "Other research tools may be substituted (computer science, statistics)." p. 347.

If foreign language can be considered a "tool," then it would seem quite plausible that an individual can be required to obtain appropriate levels of proficiency in those tool areas he will be assumed to need in his particular field. It does not seem sufficient, however, for independent curricula to determine essentials on the basis of attitudes, desires, or opinions only. A considerable number of such requirements are arranged by faculty who do not have the B.A. terminal student in mind. Stasbach, for example, indicates:

> "...most of us are actually thinking of the college major when we so eloquently proclaim the broadening virtures of language study." 1955, p. 120.

Spencer (1965) found considerable differences in French majors compared to non-majors when a Foreign Language Questionnaire was administered to all enrollees in French, Latin, German, Spanish, and Russian 101, 102, 103, and 104. For the French results the data for students was divided into two groups--those students who indicated that they intended to, or were presently majoring or minoring in French, versus those students who did not intend to or were not majors or minors in French. There were 1252 non-majors or minors and 219 majors or minors. Of the 219, 169 indicated a French minor and 105 indicated a French major (some students obviously chose both).

The choices students made on each question on the questionnaire are indicated in Appendix A. The major results were as follows:

(1) More of the majors took foreign language in elementary and junior high school.

(2) More of the majors took a greater number of foreign language courses in high school and received better grades in the courses they took.

(3) More of the majors took French in high school but also more of them had Latin. The typical pattern of majors was Latin in the Freshman and Sophomore years and French in the Junior or Senior years.

(4) More of the majors classified their high school program methodology as a combination audio-lingual and grammar/translation. The non-majors chose grammar/translation.

(5) More of the majors indicated that their high school program was better and their language learning aptitude higher. More of them had a language laboratory in high school.

(6) The majors thought English taught best in high school, while the non-majors thought Math taught best. The majors ranked foreign language much higher than did the non-majors.

(7) The majors were more interested in foreign language, while the non-majors were more mathematically interested. They felt that foreign language would be of more use in their professional careers and is the easiest subject for them. Majors felt that math and science were most difficult for them. The majors seem to have vocational interest in foreign language.

(8) Majors felt they were prepared to answer in class, found speaking most difficult and writing least difficult. Non-majors found reading least difficult and listening more difficult. Majors prefer oral-aural language training, non-majors prefer reading emphasis.

(9) Majors were more motivated in the course and classified the lab as more effective than non-majors. Majors felt that the lab should be required and should emphasize conversation. They also felt that more background in the foreign culture would be helpful and that everyone ought to take a foreign language. Both majors and non-majors felt that a language house would improve their language achievement.

(10) Both groups found grammar most difficult.

A study of the literature in foreign language learning was conducted by the author with minimal degrees of success. Objective or experimental studies are rare, but ad hoc and visionary reports of an expository or anecdotal nature are in abundance. As John Carroll indicates:

> "...members of the foreign language teaching profession perform studies with insufficient experimental rigor. Numerous studies are announced as 'experiments' (e.g. Ferroll, 1956-57; Siciliano, 1959; Turner, 1958) but on examination turn out to be simply reports of new teaching procedures. Even when there is an effort to set up a true experiment (e.g. Berglum, 1958; Foteo, 1955; Hoge, 1959; McMullen, 1955) the controls are often completely inadequate." 1961, p. 1066.

In order to determine degrees of achievement success in a program, one can not overlook motivational and educational objectives, both in terms of student and institutional behavior. Success in foreign language teaching comes as a result of, among other things, a "...rational analysis of the terminal behavior desired as a result of teaching..." Carroll, 1963, p. 1094.

Leonard Bloomfield seems somewhat critical of foreign language teaching in general when he states:

> "The large part of the work in high schools and colleges that has been devoted to foreign language study includes an appalling waste of effort; not one pupil in a hundred learns to speak and understand, or even to read, a foreign language. The mere disciplinary or 'transfer' value of learning the arbitrary glossiness of a foreign language can be safely estimated at almost nil." 1933, p. 503.

The LAS Foreign Language Committee:

The LAS foreign language requirement, to date, is stated as follows:

> "A reading knowledge of a foreign language equivalent to that resulting from four semesters of study of a foreign language commenced in college is required. Completion of four years of the same foreign language in high school also satisfies this requirement." University of Illinois Bulletin, 1966, p. 323.

The LAS committee discussed this requirement in depth and reached concensus as follows:

(1) We favor the proposition that students in Liberal Arts and Sciences should have a foreign language learning experience at some stage in their total education (overwhelmingly approved).

(2) We do not approve the present requirement as a minimum for graduation (overwhelmingly approved).

The stage was set by these two votes for further analysis. The committee was in favor of some language experience (not necessarily at the college level) but was opposed to the present requirement. On June 6 other statements were presented for vote. Table IV presents the results of the secret ballot. It can be seen that there was a level of consistency in the pattern of voting; i.e. opposition to the present requirement, establishment of a system of exemption, opposition to raising the requirement, approval of some foreign language experience as an entrance requirement.

The picture becomes cloudy from this point on. Consensus was obtained on the statement (revised #5)

> "I believe there should be no college graduation requirement in foreign language, provided that there is a two-year high school foreign language requirement." (Approved, 9-3)

The problem of lack of consensus revolved around why the present system was being opposed. Some committee members objected to the requirement because it states "...reading...," but does not include other skills. Some were opposed because they felt the requirement was too lenient or that it should be in the hands of the

Table IV

QUESTIONNAIRE

Foreign Language Committee
6 June 1968

1.	I favor the continuation of the present college foreign language requirement.	Yes ☐	4
		No ☐	7
2.	I believe the present two-year foreign language entrance requirement should be dropped.	Yes ☐	6
		No ☐	5
3.	I think the two-year entrance requirement in foreign language should be increased to four years.	Yes ☐	6
		No ☐	6
4.	I think that the present graduation requirement in foreign language should be raised across the board for all LAS students.	Yes ☐	1
		No ☐	11
5.	I believe there should be no college graduation requirement in foreign language, provided that there is a 2-year high school foreign requirement.	Yes ☐	5
		No ☐	7
6.	I favor the continuation of the present university requirement for entrance (2 years of study in high school).	Yes ☐	4
		No ☐	7
7.	I believe that entering students in the college should have some competency in a foreign language.	Yes ☐	10
		No ☐	2
8.	I prefer a system of selection foreign language requirements in the college to be determined by the student's own major department.	Yes ☐	7
		No ☐	4
9.	I would like to have a system of selective requirements to be determined primarily by the student's aptitude for foreign language study and secondarily by his major area of academic interest.	Yes ☐	6
		No ☐	5
10.	I believe that candidates for the B.A. degree should demonstrate proficiency in at least one foreign language.	Yes ☐	5
		No ☐	7
11.	If the college is to have a general foreign language requirement, I favor a system of exemptions for the few students who, for psychological or physiological reasons, are severely handicapped from learning a foreign language.	Yes ☐	10
		No ☐	2
12.	If the college is to have a general foreign language requirement, I favor a system providing a number of options for its completion (i.e. literature in translation, "civilization" courses, general culture courses, etc.).	Yes ☐	7
		No ☐	5
13.	I believe the college should urge departments to develop courses in which a foreign language would be used in at least a part of the instruction (readings and lectures).	Yes ☐	11
		No ☐	1

department rather than the college, that it contained no exemption procedure, that it exemplified a too inclusive policy (all students), and some were opposed to any foreign language requirement.

The committee chairmen on June 7 elected to divide the original committee into two sub-committees--more or less on pro or con lines. Mr. Kitzmiller was appointed chairman of the pro foreign language group and Mr. Spencer of the con foreign language group. Each sub-committee was composed thereafter of those members who chose (were more aligned with) the pro or con elements. Two reports are to be forthcoming--one from each group. This report, therefore, is a statement of the argument in opposition to a college graduation foreign language requirement.

We believe that the "intention" of the foreign language requirement is a noble one but its validity is questionable. In general, it can be assumed that no set of course requirements, hours of credit, or content exposure can be said to influence all students in a desired direction. Students differ widely and benefits of any content area vary from student to student. We believe that the student himself should have a significant part in the determination of his needs, as coordinated with his departmental and college advisors. The major aim and objective of this requirement can only be expressed in very general terms, i.e. a significant experience with other cultures, languages, or peoples to an extent which will contribute to the better understanding of the world's problems and conditions, to result in a more adequate consideration of the individual's place in world society. No student can fulfill the term "liberally educated" without being exposed to, and indulging in, a significant amount of study of civilizations and peoples other than our own. This educational goal may be achieved by some students through the study of foreign language, however, this is not considered to be of sufficient ends desired. In concert with specific departmental requirements (held to a minimum), career plans, educational interests, and individual aptitudes of the student, course work in this area may encompass work in area studies, linguistics, or social sciences. Courses falling into the appropriate category are to be listed in the catalogue.

We strongly believe that merely eliminating the college requirement and placing it in the hands of the department would not improve the present situation in the least. We favor keeping a college requirement, but altering it to include:

(1) FIRST PRIORITY--Effective immediately, provision be made, by individual recommendation and petition, a procedure whereby individual students who indicate serious psychological or physiological handicap in the learning of a second language can be analyzed appropriately, and if found valid exclused from the foreign language requirement. The credits normally to be earned in foreign language work to be substituted by course work in areas outlined in point #2 below.

(2) SECOND PRIORITY--Effective as quickly as possible, an alternative set of courses to be substituted for work in foreign language or the alternatives would be determined by departmental or curriculum requirements, the interests and aptitudes of the student and career plans. Substitutions might include area studies, linguistics, and social sciences relating to foreign cultures, computer science, etc. It is recommended that expansion of literature courses (in translation) be accomplished, especially in non-western areas.

(3) THIRD PRIORITY--That (a) the requirement in foreign language for graduation with a B.A. degree be abolished to be replaced by a system of alternatives, and that (b) the entrance requirement in foreign language similarly be abolished.

We also seriously recommend that review of the LAS curriculums as a whole be undertaken, with particular reference to opportunities for students to elect courses in non-western studies. We perceive, as an ideal perhaps, a pattern of a year study in western civilization and a year of non-western study--to include languages (study

about if not of), literatures, economics, geography, art, history, politics, and culture (habits, mores, taboos, customs, attitudes, psychology, sociology, etc.).

It is recommended that any requirement to be established by the LAS college always be stated with appropriate systems of alternatives to complete the stated objective.

Any recommendation relative to a curriculum should be viewed in a consistent light, i.e. all practices, adoptions, changes, additions, or substractions are on trial and probation; all need to be evaluated continuously. What is perhaps more important is a recommendation for this very condition--an experimental attitude, a constant evaluation of our product. The only way we may improve and progress is by a constant system of feedback from and through our products. We must assume a responsibility for what we have produced--social, political, attitudinal, and economic--and if we find faults in these they are, in part at least, our fault. To the extent that we are dissatisfied with the present state of our society, we must install and instill in the next generation the tools to alter that society. Our criterion of success is society itself. For instance, how can we at one hand criticize our political establishment, the lowering of morals, violence, while on the other hand do nothing in our curriculum to deal with these very subjects? Thus foreign language is but one aspect of a whole set of problems inherent in the development and traditionalization of education--it takes some crises, some specific instance of expressed dissatisfaction before we even open the door to examine it. We should build a system of self-examination that constantly collects evaluative data, a system of formation and reformation that leads to constant change as a pattern rather than occassional change as an exception. The goals of a liberal arts education are not the same as they were twenty years ago--but more important than a definition--do we know that we met these goals twenty years ago? Or our goals now?

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